

Capsule Summary

CE-112A

Principio Iron Works Company Office

Principio

Private

Circa 1877-80

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning in 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership.

This two-story, Second Empire style brick building was built as the office of the George P. Whitaker Company. Supported by a cutstone foundation, the structure has been stuccoed on the exterior of the first floor. At one time this building also housed the Principio Post Office.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Eastern Shore

Chronological/Development Period (s):

Agricultural-Industrial Transition: 1781-1835

Industrial-Urban Dominance: 1870-1930

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme (s):

Economics

Resource Type:

Category: Building

Historic Environment: Village

Historic Functions (s) and Use (s):

Company Office

Known Design Source:

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

MARYLAND INVENTORY OF  
HISTORIC PROPERTIES

Survey No. CE-112A

Magi No.

DOE ☐ yes ☐ no

## 1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Principio Iron Works - Company Office

and/or common Principio Furnace

## 2. Location

street & number Maryland Route 7 and Principio Creek Bridge ☐ not for publication

city, town Principio Furnace ☒ vicinity of congressional district

state Maryland county Cecil

## 3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
<input type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture <input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial <input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational <input type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	<b>Public Acquisition</b>	<b>Accessible</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government <input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial <input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> no	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other:

## 4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name York Building Products

street & number 1020 N. Hartley Street telephone no.:

city, town York state and zip code PA 17405

## 5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Cecil County Courthouse liber NDS65

street & number Main Street folio 794-98

city, town Elkton state MD

## 6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date ☐ federal ☐ state ☐ county ☐ local

pository for survey records

city, town state

## 7. Description

Survey No. CE-112A

### Condition

☐ excellent

☒ good

☐ fair

☐ deteriorated

☐ ruins

☐ unexposed

### Check one

☒ unaltered

☐ altered

### Check one

☒ original site

☐ moved

date of move

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 8. Significance

Survey No. CE-12A

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

### Specific dates

### Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D  
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☒ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

SEE CONTINUATION SHEET

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. CE-10AMay, Earl Chapin. Principio To Wheeling. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1945.Robbins, Michael W. The Principio Company. New York: Garland Publishing Co., 1986.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 90 acresQuadrangle name Havre De Grace, MDQuadrangle scale 1:24000

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting NorthingB 

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Zone Easting NorthingC 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

The Principio Iron Works property is bounded by Principio Creek to the east and south, by Maryland Route 7 to the north, and by Principio Station Road to the west.

This boundary encompasses all the resources associated with the historic iron works.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Lee R. Maddex, Project Coordinator Sr.organization Institute for the History of Technology & Industrial Archaeologydate 4/30/98street & number 1535 Milegroundtelephone (304) 293-3829city or town Morgantownstate WV 26505

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
DHCP/DHCD  
100 COMMUNITY PLACE  
CROWNSVILLE, MD 21032-2023  
514-7600

The Principio Company was established in 1720. Beginning 1725, intensive ironmaking activity started at the site and continued until the American Revolution. After the war, Samuel Hughes operated a cannon factory on the site, and, in 1836, the property passed to Joseph and George Price Whitaker, who made a series of capital improvements to it. Today, the property reflects the Whitaker era of ownership. The property consists of the Second Empire-style company office building, two 1920s corn cribs, foundational remains of a circa 1836 barn, a circa 1850 tool house, a 1890s wagon barn, standing remains of a 1890s blacksmith/wheelwrights shop, a 1890 charcoal kiln, a circa 1890 wash house, foundational remains of a scale house, foundational remains of two charcoal barns, 1837 charcoal iron blast furnace with hot blast stove and waterpowered blowing engine, partial remains of a 1890 hoist house, a 1890 blower engine house, and a circa 1850 shanty.

Resource Count: one (1)

The company office was built circa 1877-80. It is a two-story Second Empire-style building with a simple mansard roof, dormers, and cupola. The first floor of the brick building has been stuccoed and was founded upon a cutstone foundation. It was named Second Empire for its association with Napoleon III's Second Empire which lasted from 1852 to 1870.<sup>1</sup>

The building was used as the office of the George P. Whitaker Company and once housed the Principio Post Office.

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<sup>1</sup>Virginia and Lee McAlester, *A Field Guide to American Houses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1990), pp. 241-42.

CE-112A

Principio Iron Works-Company Office  
Cecil County

Section 8.1

The company office is significant under Criterion C for the area of architecture. The building is Second Empire-style architecture, a high style architecture which was very popular in northeastern and the midwestern United States from 1850 to 1880.

Established in 1720, the Principio Company constructed the Principio Iron Works, the first blast furnace and refinery forge in the Maryland Colony. Located at the head of the Chesapeake Bay, the ironworks plantation consisted of the 1725 Principio Furnace, the 1728 Principio Forge, a store, and dwellings. The Principio Iron Works operated until the time of the American Revolution when they were abandoned. The property was confiscated by the state of Maryland in 1781, and it passed to Colonel Samuel Hughes in 1785. Hughes rebuilt the furnace and added a foundry for the production of cannon. After these works were destroyed by British raiders during the War of 1812, Hughes rebuilt the ironworks, but it bankrupted him and the property passed to his creditors in 1817. The property remained virtually idle for the next two decades when it was first acquired by David Stewart and others in 1834, who in turn sold it Joseph Whitaker II and his brother George Price Whitaker in 1836. The Whitaker brothers completely renovated the aged ironworks, erecting a new blast furnace plant and new worker housing. Importantly, the site was crossed by the recently completed Philadelphia, Wilmington and Baltimore Railroad which created a nexus enabling the ironwork's products to reach larger national markets. Following the Civil War, George Price Whitaker embarked on a second program of capital improvements which included the construction of a company office, a new dam, hot blast stove, blowing engine, and waterpowered turbine. Expanding the scope of production at the site, Whitaker, in 1883-84, erected a steampowered forge for the manufacture of wrought iron blooms. The 1837 furnace could not produce enough iron to keep his forge operating continuously and Whitaker commenced a third period of capital improvements to remedy this shortfall. Completed in August 1890, Whitaker erected a cupola-style blast furnace with hot blast stoves, blower engine house, boiler house, hoist house, and a cast house, but these improvements were abandoned shortly after his death in December 1890. Control of the property then passed to Whitaker's nephew Nelson E. Whitaker, who chose to close down the furnaces and produce wrought iron blooms only. Bloom production became closely allied with the Tyler Tube and Pipe Company of Washington, Pennsylvania, owned by William P. Tyler, Nelson E. Whitaker's son-in-law. The forge continued to operate until 1925 when production ceased. The storied Principio property reverted to agricultural use.



Draft

1. STATE <u>Maryland</u> COUNTY <u>Cecil County</u> TOWN <u>Principio Furnace</u> VICINITY STREET NO.		HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY <u>CE-112A</u> INVENTORY <u>CE-112A</u>	
ORIGINAL OWNER ORIGINAL USE <u>Office</u> PRESENT OWNER <u>Whitaker Iron Company</u> PRESENT USE <u>U.S. Post Office</u> WALL CONSTRUCTION <u>stone</u> NO. OF STORIES <u>1 1/2</u>		2. NAME <u>Whitaker Iron Company Office</u>  DATE OR PERIOD <u>1860-1880</u> STYLE <u>Victorian</u> ARCHITECT BUILDER	
4. NOTABLE FEATURES, HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND DESCRIPTION		3. FOR LIBRARY OF CONGRESS USE	
OPEN TO PUBLIC <u>yes</u>  The Whitaker Iron Company office, presently used for a U.S. Post Office at Principio Furnace, is a one-and-one-half-story Victorian structure with mansard roof. It is three bays long and two bays deep and constructed of stuccoed masonry on a granite foundation and basement. The mansard roof has two dormers on each of its four sides and a cupola in the center. The entire structure has elaborate Victorian trim. The cornice has brackets and encloses the gutter. The center door has six panels and the windows have interior shutters.  Behind the office is a necessary house with pediment.			
5. PHYSICAL CONDITION OF STRUCTURE    Endangered <u>NO</u> Interior <u>fair</u> Exterior <u>fair</u>			
6. LOCATION MAP (Plan Optional)		7. PHOTOGRAPH <u>CE 2261</u>	
3. PUBLISHED SOURCES (Author, Title, Pages) INTERVIEWS, RECORDS, PHOTOS, ETC. <u>Johnston, History of Cecil County,</u>		9. NAME, ADDRESS AND TITLE OF RECORDER <u>Michael Bourne</u> <u>Maryland Historical Trust</u>  DATE OF RECORD <u>December 27, 1967</u>	

← TO PENNYVILLE

CE-112A

MD RT 7 (POST ROAD)

PRINCIPIO STATION ROAD

CE-112A

CE-1499



CE-1500

CE-1501

CE-1502

CE-1503

CE-1506

CE-1504

CE-1505

CE-1507



CE-1508

CE-1509

CE-1510

CE-1511

CE-1512

PRINCIPIO CREEK



NO SCALE

Principio Jaw Womies

RESOURCE SKETCH MAP

MAY 1998

Principio Furnace, Cecil County, Maryland





PRINCIPIO IRON WORKS  
AND REPAIRS

NO  
TRESPASSING  
PROPERTY WILL  
BE FORFEITED TO  
PROPERTY OF THE  
STATE OF ALABAMA  
BY VIOLATION

CE-112A

COMPANY OFFICE

PRINCIPIO IRON WORKS

CECIL COUNTY, MARYLAND

LEE R. MADDEX

MARCH 1998

MARYLAND SHPD

NE ELEVATION

1/16



CE-112-A

Whittaker Iron Company  
at Principio Furnace

Negatives at MIT



PRINCIPIO IRON WORKS  
FOUNDED MARCH 4, 1720 LONDON



CE-112A

Whittaker Iron Company - Office

North Elevation

G. Henry 5/85 - Negatives at MHT

21 State Circle, Annapolis, Md. 21401



Whitaker Iron Co. Office  
Near Perryville  
Northwest Elevation  
MOB/1968  
NEG - MD. Hist. Trust

CE - 112

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